XIO3

GCACE

Garden City Atari Computer Enthusiasts

1003 Amphion St. Victoria, B.C. Canada V8S 4G2

SEPTEMBER/NOVEMBER 1999

ATARI® NEWS AND RUMOURS

By Rowland Grant

While Hasbro has made immediate use of the Atari name in its new games, it is not particularly interested in the remaining users of the original Atari products. Hasbro did proclaim the Jaguar game system an open platform. But that does not mean Hasbro will support the surviving Jaguar game developers. In order to make a game work on the Jaguar it must be encrypted. Hasbro will not release the encryption. This may be because it does not own the encryption code, and therefore cannot legally give it away. One can make hardware alterations to the Jaguar so that it does not need the encryption. However the cheapest way to launch a new Jaguar game is to crack the encryption code. This is the approach being attempted by 4Play, the makers of the game Battle- Sphere. They have assembled a bank of eight specially modified Jaguar consoles. These are constantly booting a self-modifying code and checking the success of the attempt. Once a successful start of a game occurs, they will have the encryption. Calculations indicate that this should take no more than 125 days of testing.

Songbird productions has announced that the Jaguar game Skyhammer may be released in December. Originally de- veloped by Ground Zero for Atari, Skyhammer is a first person shooter game in which the player roams through a huge city. Songbird is using a method of bypassing encryption developed by Atari hobbyist Scott Walters. More games are promised if sales are satisfactory. With few if any Atari publications left, Songbird is depending on the internet. However a new magazine devoted to Atari and related games is being planned. This is"System-X Gaming. It will cover games on the Jaguar, Lynx, classic Atari platforms and the new NUON system. Of course you may need to go to their web site to subscribe.

Inside

There may be a new magazine for Atari computer users. Parkland Publishing is considering a 16 to 20 page magazine called the *Atarian*. Price is 2 pounds UK per issue. The *Atarian* would contain news, reviews, hardware and software updates, letters and advertising. Apparently there is lots of interest from potential advertisers. If there is enough interest from potential subscribers, Parkland will start publication. They are soliciting a response through email.

The new magazine proposal is timely, as we are about to lose some existing Atari publications. *Atari Computing* will cease operations after issue #16, which could emerge sometime in the next few months. *Atari Computing* began about three years ago as a semi-commercial project by a group of Atari computer enthusiasts. Semi-commercial means that contributors and staff were not paid. The initial trial issue sold 1300 copies in a brief period. Circulation rose to 1600 by issue #8 and has slowly declined to 900 at present. Publishing this magazine takes much time and energy. The staff and contributors are beginning to feel burnt out. The sudden death of office manager, Brian Stanton, has reinforced the feeling. Also the slow decline in subscribers means that at some future time the magazine will no longer be viable. The staff felt that it would be best to quit before then.

Colin Polonowski announced that the *Atari Times* magazine has ceased publication. A continuation of Atari times as an on-line magazine was planned, but Colin could not find enough support from readers and contributors. Colin will maintain the web page where all past issues of *Atari Times* are available for download.

Also *ST+* magazine has become scarce. There are complaints that several months have passed without a new issue. There is a rumour that the next issue of *ST+* will be the last. What's happening? Is everyone getting tired?

See *Rumours* on Page 4

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues are $25 per family per year. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter, access to a few hundred 8-bit public domain disks and 210 ST disks in our library and literally thousands of 8-bit and ST PD files on various CD-ROMS.

MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Nellie McClung branch of the Greater Victoria Public Library at 3950 Cedar Hill Road (corner of McKenzie) on the fourth Thursday of each month. All meetings are at 7 pm. There is no meeting in the month of December.

EDITORIAL

As time goes on, things change. I'm sad to report that my Atari TT has some problems, forcing me to produce this issue of *XIO3* on my IBM. Horrors! I used to have two Ataris with desktop publishing software on them, so if one died, I could produce the newsletter on the other. Now, the IBM has to assume the backup role. And I'm determined to use it only as a backup until I get my TT repaired. One of the reasons this issue is later than usual is because I had to recreate *XIO3* using Microsoft Publisher. I truly hate Windows 95, but I guess Bill Gates isn't completely evil, as Ted Skrecky claims, because Microsoft Publisher is a quite nice desktop publisher, relatively easy to use and doing everything you need to do in this field.

Now that I have admitted Microsoft isn't completely corrupt, I feel the need to quit writing and fortify myself from my handy-dandy vodka bottle. Once again I bless my Russian heritage. Cheers!

Gord

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Programming	"	"
DOS & Operating System	"	"
Word Processing	"	"
Games	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
16/32 Bit Applications:		
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Games	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
Telecommunications	"	"
TOS & Operating System	John Towler	382-5083
Hardware:		
Modem & Printer Setup	John Picken	598-2386
Repairs & Sales	Gord Hooper	475-0857
Other Computers:		
Apple Macintosh	John 'Towler	382-5083
Commodore Amiga	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
IBM's & Clones	Rowland Grant	598-3661
	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
	John Picken	598-2386

PEEKing Around

by Gordon F. Hooper

...GEORGE ROSE finally opened his wallet to let some moths out, and, coincidentally, paid his overdue GCACE dues. Doesn't that make you feel better, George? He now is interested in getting on the FreeNet, and I hope to get out to see him soon... DOUG SKRECKY, the evil brother who lives in Vancouver, has personally caused the Vancouver FreeNet to impose an 8 hour-a-week limit on using the system. Doug spends a lot of time looking on the Internet for subjects that interest him, and then downloading a lot of it, consequently the time limit. The other evil brother, TED, suggested that Doug enroll on the Victoria FreeNet, so that when his 8 hours are up, he can get unlimited time on our FreeNet. I'm expecting to hear shortly that Victoria will be imposing limits... CLIFF BOUVETTE will be hosting the October executive meeting, which is good news for the other members, who scarf down his baking at a fast rate. Cliff still uses his 8-bit, but he also has JOHN PICKEN helping get his clone running. I would still advise getting a Mac when upgrading, but unfortunately the clones are available for next to nothing, and for people like me, price is a big factor... Please phone GORD at 475-0857 with news of members committing nefarious deeds... Now it's humour time...

A guy has been sitting in a bar all night, staring at a girl wearing the tightest pants he's ever seen. Finally his curiosity gets the best of him, so he walks over and asks, "How do you get into those pants?"

The young woman looks him over and replies, "Well, you could start by buying me a drink."

Another little guy was sitting in the same bar, drinking, minding his own business when all of a sudden this great big dude comes in and --WHACK!!-- knocks him clean off the bar stool and onto the floor.

The idiot says, "That was a karate chop from Korea."

The little guy thinks "GEEZ," but he gets back up on the stool and starts drinking again when all of a sudden -- WHACK!!- the big dude knocks him down AGAIN and says, "That was a judo chop from Japan."

The little guy has had enough of this, so he gets up, brushes himself off and quietly leaves.

The little guy is gone for an hour or so. When he returns, without saying a word, he walks up behind the big idiot and --BONG!!-- bangs the big dude off his stool, knocking him out cold.

The little guy looks at the bartender and says, "When he comes to, tell him that is a crowbar from Sears."

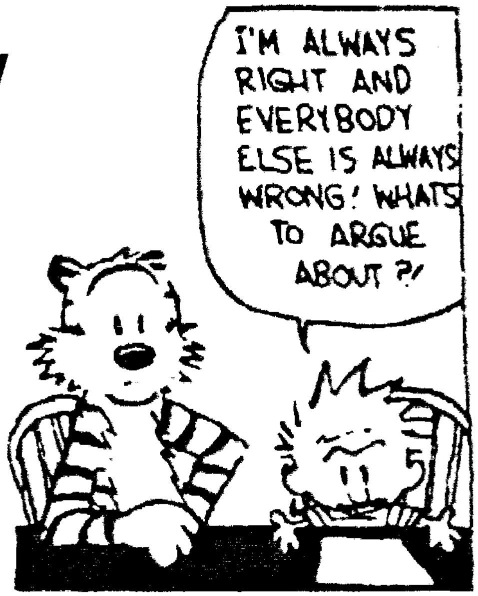
Before marriage, a man yearns for the woman he loves.
After marriage, the "y" becomes silent.

When a newly married couple smiles, everyone knows why.
When a ten-year married couple smiles, everyone wonders why.

My wife told me to be more affectionate, so I got two girlfriends.

A husband said to his wife, "No, I don't hate your relatives.
In fact, I like your mother-in-law better than mine."

How do most men define marriage? A very expensive way to get your laundry done free



The most effective way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once.

Bunny and Bob, two frequent users of a chat room, discovered that they had a lot in common. Eventually, they abandoned the chat room for a more intimate correspondence. After months of virtual kinkiness, the two decided to meet each other face-to-face at a small café.

Bunny arrived a little late. One customer, a short, frail man with an eye patch, sat at the back of the café.

"Are you Bob?" asked Bunny.

"Yes I am," said Bob.

"Unbelievable!" Bunny exclaimed. "You told me you were tall, dark and handsome."

"How do you think I feel?" Bob asked, his face turning red. "You told me you were skinny, blonde, and female!"

Rumours
Continued from Page 1

The FaST Club in the UK used to publish a magazine called *Atari Computing*. In the glory days of the Atari ST, one could even buy the magazine here in Victoria from local Atari dealers. According to Derryck Croker of the Cheshunt Computer Club, The FaST Club and its publication are still in existence, although I am not aware of any recent issues of *ST Applications*.

Cleveland Freenet, the World's original freenet closed down at the end of September after 20 years of service. It was sponsored by Case Western Reserve University, and was closed because it become obsolete (according to the University). The Cleveland Freenet had a very active Atari base which even published an online magazine called CAIN (Central Atari Information Network. And the publishers of CAIN organized a large Atari show in Cleveland in 1994. Its loss will be missed. However, the Atari base has been salvaged and may be available on-line soon.

Shareware updates are continuing to arrive. Olivier Booklage has announced that a new version of CAB.OVL is available. This overlay software is essential for using the CAB internet browser. CAB.OVL hastwo new features and a bug fix.

Francois Le Coat of France has continued to work on his 2D graphics describer and 3D modeller called Eureka. This software is useful for designing all sorts of mathematical shapes. In 2 dimensions the program will also plot graphs, and do some numerical analysis of series, sounds, images, fractals. In 3 dimensions Eureka generates three dimensional shapes. Many 3D export formats are allowed, from vectorial graphical formats, to 3D image synthesis like Persistence Of Vision or Virtual Reality Modelling Language (VRML). Also shapes can be animated, thanks to a "time" parameter. Eureka is a complete package, including attached programs and accessories. They have been tested on many ATARI platforms including MAGIC and clones. Eureka is shareware, and the posted version is not limited in any way.

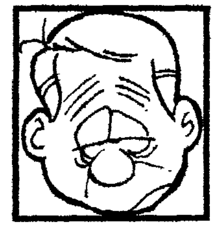
Gary Priest in the UK bought a Pentium III PC and has been diverted out of the Atari scene for a few months. However he has reported back and says that he will continue to support his popular NEWSwatch and POPwatch software if there is sufficient interest. Gary is requesting some user feedback. And from Germany, a beta version of ST-CAD 1.5 by Matthias Krutz is now available.

Thomas Sahlin of Sweden has released his HTML Conversion Utility HTML2TXT version 2.0. HTML2TXT is an application used for converting HTML files from the web into standard ASCII text files. Unlike similar programs that only strip out the HTML tags, HTML2TXT actually interprets the tags and formats the text files accordingly. The program can also be used to perform other tasks, such as converting text files between Atari and PC character sets, or optimizing HTML files by removing unnecessary line-breaks. New features include a better interface. Configurations and batch-lists are now automatically saved. The program has been completely rewritten, and runs almost twice as fast as earlier versions. Registering HTML2TXT is completely free of charge.

I notice that Ernest Schreurs of Holland (co-producer of the PoolDisk Too CD) has created emulation software for a Wang VS computer. Ernest programmed in C on his Atari ST Book, but found that the emulation works better on a fast PC. The Wang VS is a mini computer with an instruction set similar to the IBM 360 series of computers. Wang computers were widely used in our town (Victoria) about a decade ago, and it is possible that a few Wang VS networks are still functioning here.

Development continues on Extendos Gold. Version 3.2 is now available along with an update of CD Writer. This allows the production of audio CD's using an ST. Unfortunately there seems to be no ST software driver for saving files to CD-RW equipment. Drivers are available for scanners however. Homa Systems House has updated ScanX to support the new UMAX Astra 2400s and Microtek ScanMaker X6 SCSI. The "Ultimate Virus Killer 2000" is the industry standard virus killer for the Atari ST/TT/Falcon platform. This program has been around for more than a decade. The latest version (8.1) is now shareware.And Kevin Dermott reports that Steinberg is still selling Cubase, the popular MIDI related software.

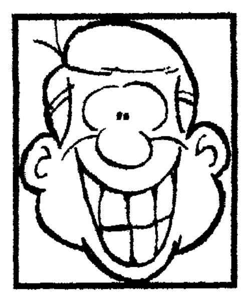
Chris Wilkinson in new Zealand has successfully connected an Atari Falcon through its LAN port to a Macintosh using a Mac printer cable. He used communication terminal software on each. Both terminals required the same settings of course, and the Falcon needed HS-modem software to get higher transfer speeds. And for networked ST's, Vassilis Papathanassiou of Greece says that a new version of BNeT (ver 2.07) is now available. This version is faster, particularly when running under MagiC. It enables the networked ST's to share files. It will also share printers using NVDI if the text has been printed to file first.



You will notice that my writings in *XIO3* have been getting shorter. I spend most of my

...my writings in XIO3 are shorter.

time reading material from the Internet. There is lots to read, and the postings are often interesting, however there is little news. Individuals all over the world, but particularly in Europe, have been supporting Atari computers with their software updates. In this issue I have been careful to identify their origins. But we are losing them one by one. And the Atari Computer publications in English seem to be disappearing too. While something remains to report and comment on, I will continue the *News and Rumours* column... until the next century anyway.



...but I will continue the* News and Rumours *column... until the next century anyway.

Internet Access

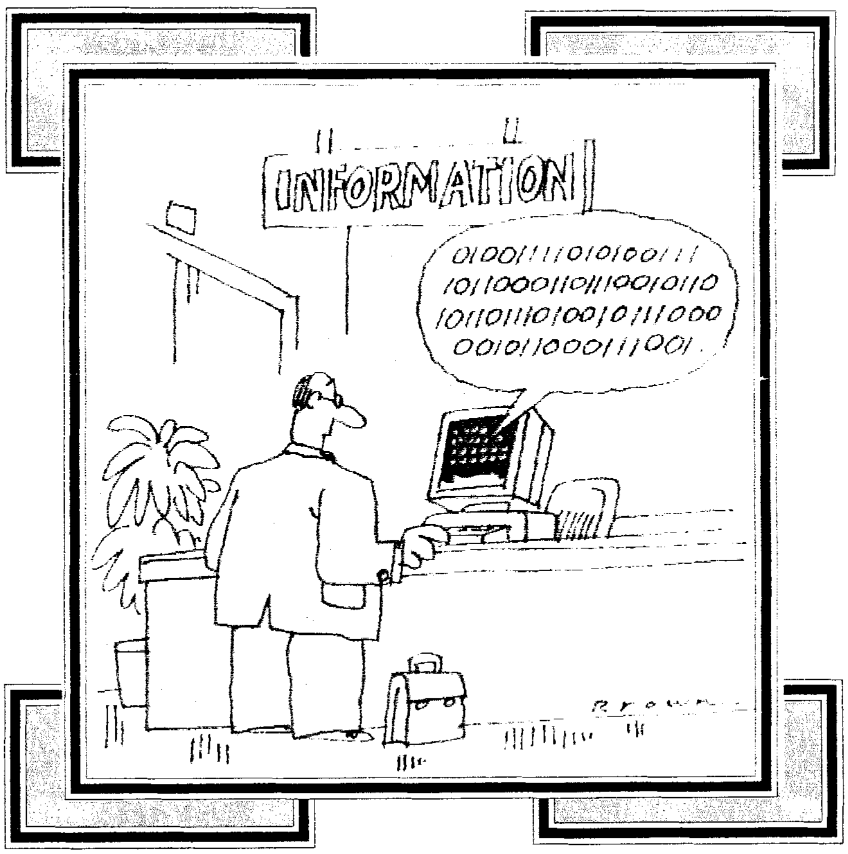
by Rowland Grant

Both the July and August meetings were mainly devoted to Internet access, and in particular the ACTS bulletin board. ACTS stands for All Christian Telecommunications System. ACTS is run by Michael Harrison, a former member of our executive. Some years back, Mike was the co-sysop of the Pothole BBS. Mike ran a call forwarding service for the Pothole, and also a kind of alternative BBS using his Atari 8-bit system. Mike has switched to Apple Macintosh computers for ACTS, since ACTS is also an Internet Service Provider needing tons of storage and lots of speed.

ACTS is very much like a regular bulletin board in that it handles e-mail, stores and transfers files, and hosts all sorts of message bases called conferences. ACTS uses software called FirstClass to provide e-mail. It also allows access to other services including over 3000 more networks in addition to the internet. FirstClass is published by SoftArc of Canada. FirstClass client software is available from ACTS for users of Windows and Macintosh computers.

However ACTS itself can handle almost any input from any computer system over a wide range of baud rates. While ACTS provides a graphics user interface for Windows and Mac users. It also can be controlled through a command line VT100 terminal screen. So any ST user should have no real difficulty logging on to ACTS. Mike brought a number of copies of ACTS Victoria Seminar Manual to the September meeting. This manual contains complete instructions for command line users. Mike generously offered to set up a base or conference for Garden City ACE. This could be accessed without charge to members.

At the August meeting Mike brought his cell phone and a palm top computer. With a special adapter and modem, Mike dialled ACTS and briefly demonstrated the desktop. Unfortunately the signal faded before he could demonstrate all the features. New users who sign up for internet access are supplied with a setup guide and quick reference manual. It is devoted mainly to Windows and Mac users. Mike says that a complete manual is available online, a very large manual. If you wish to sign up for ACTS Victoria, call Michael Harrison at (250) 480-1097 Victoria or (250) 245-8523 Nanaimo.



ProBASIC For 8-Bit

by Rowland Grant

Steven Tucker, the creator of APE, the Atari Peripheral Emulator, has just completed his new version APE'98. It is now available for beta testing by registered users (APE is shareware). Like SIO2PC, APE turns a PC into a hardware peripheral for Atari 8-bit computers. While SIO2PC runs under DOS only, APE will run under Windows. The new version includes keyboard commands, a complete R: telnet server, telnet client, windows shell extensions and the usual bug fixes.

Learning that the Cleveland FreeNet is due to be shut down after many years of service to the Atari community, Steven Tucker downloaded all of the texts from all the SIGs listed under "go atari'. He collected 120 MB of material. This Steven reorganized for use on the web using the perl scripting language. The search engine and index takes up another 100MB. Steven does not have sufficient web space to make this available himself. However Anthony Politz is setting up a stable web site at his office (running Linux) and has offered to include the Cleveland Free net Atari archive.

Curt Vendel heads the Atari Historical Society. He has approached Hasbro concerning the release of Atari proprietary material. Hasbro has given permission for the release of technical data and schematics for Antic, GTIA and POKEY chips as well as the internal Atari document "SIO Users Handbook". All this and more is on the web at www.atari-history.com.

Lance Ringquist of Video61 is making cartridge versions of some of the better games from Antic magazine. Two games have been announced: Clash of Kings and "smush" (I don't remember smush). These cartridges can be ordered from www.atarisales.com or Video 61 & Atari Sales, 22735 Congo ST NE Stacy MN 55079.

Paul Nurminen has found that the SIO2PC cable can be used with the ST and the software is available. It is called 800XL DeeJay. The SIO2PC cable should work of course, since all it is doing is matching circuit voltages.

Tom Hunt has announced the beta release of ProBASIC for Atari 8-bit computers. This seems to be a BASIC editor, interpreter and compiler. Tom feels that ProBASIC is particularly well suited for creating modules for BBS Express! Professional, and is appealing to Atari sysops to test ProBASIC, I seem to recall that Tom released CTH BASIC some years ago.

At the last executive meeting at Gordon Hooper's, we saw his Windows 95 startup screen. The Windows screens can be customized, and Gordon's had images of his favourite mascots Calvin and Hobbes. Among Atari users, another popular Windows startup screen image is DOS 2.0S. But don't press "A" and expect to get a directory, it's a PC after all.

